
Note on the American Barn Owl.

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The barn owl appears to be a rather common bird on the Ohio State University grounds, but on account of its nocturnal habits and quiet disposition it is not often seen. Several specimens have been sent in from different parts of the state, indicating that the species is at home in other sections besides Columbus.

Last fall, near the first of November it was observed that a nest of the barn owl was located in a cavity in one of the large sycamores in the field near the Biological Building. During the early part of each night the young birds made a great deal of noise, in their way, about the nest and the old ones were seen occasionally leaving and returning. About the 10th of the same month two of the young were observed on the ground near the nesting tree, but, although they were quite well feathered they could not fly sufficiently well to get back into the nest and so lost their lives. The flight feathers were well out and the birds were just at the stage when they gave a fine exhibition of the pushing out of the nest down by the more substantial body covering.

The season of nesting is one of the more interesting points in the matter, and if we consider Audubon's calculations as a guide the eggs must have been deposited sometime in August, perhaps near the middle of that month. As practically all of our birds are through nesting at this season, it is difficult to arrive at the point of considering this the regular nesting time of the species in question in this section. There is in the museum of the university a set of eggs of the barn owl labelled Santa Paula, California, March 27th.

Some of the students and myself in looking over the ground beneath the tree, picked up a number of the cast-up pellets which contained many jaw bones of the common meadow mouse and so far as we could judge this mammal furnished much of the food of the owls.